3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
NO6 Comanche NO6

meat. They raised no vegetables of their own, yet they came from a background of food gatherers and did not forget their heritage. They utilized a large number of vegetables and fruits. Women did most of the seeking for plants, but even the men knew what was growing about them and how to use it. G. G. Carlson and V. H. Jones have given the expert judgment that "the average Comanche has a very good knowledge of his plant environment and particularly of those plants which are or have been of value to his tribe."[12] Fifty-two wild plants with their uses as given by Comanche informants in the work of the Santa Fé Laboratory group are listed by Carlson and Jones. Of these, twenty-seven different plants were used as food. It would seem that this number would compare rather favorably with the variety of fruits and vegetables eaten by most Americans today. Twenty-two of the listed plants were used for medicinal effect in the Comanche native pharmacology.

The facts, when marshaled, simply do not support the statement of Captains R. B. Marcy and G. B. McClellan that fresh meat was the only food of the Comanches "with the exception of a few wild plants which they find on the prairies."[13]

Among the fruits, the persimmon, mulberry, "haws," wild plums, grapes and currants, juniper berries, hackberries, prickly pear cactus, and sumac were gathered. Persimmons were eaten fresh and also dehydrated and stored. For storing, the persimmon was beaten to a pulp, the seeds removed, and the paste sun-dried in cakes. The cakes were later soaked in water and used in a variety of ways. Plums were eaten fresh or stored for winter use in a similar manner, as were also grapes. Prickly pears were sun-dried for winter use, and hackberries were pulped, mixed with fat, and roasted in balls on the end of a stick.

Pecan nuts were an obvious delicacy for any Indians living in Texas or Oklahoma, and if times were hard, the Comanches shelled and boiled the acorn of the blackjack oak.

For starchy substance all Comanche bands dug and ate the tuberous roots of Indian potato, either raw or boiled—and one band, remember, was even called the *Yep-eaters*. Four or five other root plants,

[12] G. G. Carlson and V. H. Jones, "Some Notes on Uses of Plants by the Comanche Indians," *Papers* of the Michigan Academy of Science, Arts, and Letters, Vol. XXV (1940), 518.

[13] Marcy, *Exploration of the Red River of Louisiana in the year 1852*, 111.

3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
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We threw a large flint stone, from two to six feet in circumference, into the fire. After the stone became very hot, small thin pieces would pop off; we selected those pieces which would require the least work to put into shape, and picked these pieces up with a stick split at the end; while these pieces were very hot, we dropped cold water on those places we wished to thin down; the cold water caused the spot touched to chip off, and in this way we made some of the keenest pointed and sharpest arrows that could be fashioned out of stone.[14]

All efforts of archaeologists to determine a Comanche-type flint arrow point have been in vain. In this connection Professor Mildred Pickle Mayhall says, "There are several mentions of distinctive points and shafts for different tribes but just what those differences were we do not exactly know. Poisoned arrows may have belonged to all the Texas tribes but there is little definite information about this save in reference to the Comanches."[15] The Comanches did poison their arrow points occasionally for use in war, by making an extract from a plant not known to our informants or by sticking them in a dead skunk.

The bow and arrow was exceptionally accurate up to fifty yards or more. The Comanche arrow shot from a good bow could wing a true flight for three hundred yards. It has been maintained on good authority that at a distance of from ten to fifteen yards, an arrow (twenty to thirty inches in length) could be driven completely through the carcass of a buffalo, providing it struck no bone, that an object the size of a doorknob could be hit by an expert marksman an average of four out of five shots, and that an expert Comanche hunter could kill twice the number of buffalo with bow and arrow as an American with a pistol.[16]

The superiority of bow and arrow over the old-type musket was recognized by the Comanches. When muskets first became known to them, they were all eager to obtain them. But when the novelty

[14] Lehmann, *op. cit.*, 93–94.

[15] Mildred P. Mayhall, "The Indians of Texas: the Atakapa, the Karankawa, the Tonkawa" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Texas Library), 608–609.

[16] Gregg, *op. cit.*, 361–63, 233; Carter, *On the Border with MacKenzie*, 296; Marcy, *Adventure on Red River*, 160.

5: Carlson & Jones E, N-4, 5 (1933)1939
NO6 Comanche NO6

824 bers of the genus Ilex, which were similarly used. The well-known
262 "black drink" of the Southeastern Indians was prepared from *Ilex*
272 *vomitoria, Ilex cassine,* and perhaps from other species. However, although four species of Ilex are listed for Oklahoma (23, pp. 299–300), their range is given as in the southeastern part of the state, and they perhaps do not occur near the Comanche reservation.

000 Hoebel's notes on the Shoshone (10) contain an interesting item to which we know no parallel. He records the use of a plant (Shoshone: *po':int*^{a}) which is described as similar to the maidenhair fern (*Adiantum spp.*). The minute orange "seeds [sporangia?] in the leaves" were threshed by rubbing the leaves between the hands, and were then winnowed, ground, and boiled in water for soup.

824 A number of Comanche plant medicines were recorded, for a
278 rather wide variety of ailments. Most of these medicines seem to be in the nature of practical home remedies, and few have anything of magic or of ceremony about them. Chamberlain (6, p. 46) gives the Gosiute term for medicine as *na'-tsu.* It is interesting to note that a number of the Comanche names for important medicines have this ending.

[844] The flowers of the sneezeweed (*Helenium microcephalum*) were broken up and inhaled to induce sneezing as an aid in the expulsion of afterbirth. These flowers were similarly used in clearing the nasal passages. It seems likely that the plant would be effective for such purposes, as it secretes a resin which Stemen and Meyers (23, p. 599) say is poisonous to some people; it causes a skin condition similar to that produced by poison oak (poison ivy). This resin in contact with the nasal membranes would probably induce sneezing.

[841] Two other plants were said to be employed in obstetrical cases. A tea made from the root of an unidentified plant (Comanche: *pehenatsu*) was drunk to check excessive menstrual discharge. The Arikara also use a root for this purpose, that of the mallow (*Malva coccinea*) triturated with the gum from the chokecherry and given as a drink (8, p. 74). After childbirth the Comanche woman was
[844] laid on a padding of plants of silvery wormwood (*Artemisia filifolia*) over hot coals. No explanation of this procedure was obtained; the plant was widely used, however, both medicinally and ceremonially, throughout the Plains region, and smoke from it was considered effective in purification.

5: Carlson & Jones E, N-4, 5 (1933)1939
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Plant remedies played a part in the Comanche treatment of venereal diseases. The root of the thistle (*Cirsium undulatum*) was boiled and the liquid drunk in cases of gonorrhea. Another medicinal drink for gonorrhea was prepared by making an infusion of the stems of an unidentified plant (Comanche: *mawitsɔkᵛ*). Syphilitic sores were treated with the ashes of the stems of little bluestem grass (*Andropogon scoparius*).

Two plants were used by the Comanche, in much the same manner, for both toothache and sore throat. For toothache the root of the purple coneflower (*Echinacea sp.*) or the bark of the root of the prickly ash (*Zanthoxylum americanum*) was held against the tooth to relieve pain. In cases of sore throat the root of the coneflower was boiled in water and the liquid drunk, or the inner bark of the prickly ash was ground and placed in the throat. This similarity may indicate some association of tooth and throat troubles in the minds of the Comanche, but it very likely has no significance, since both plants were general cure-alls among various tribes. The Cheyenne utilized Echinacea for the same purposes, and the methods of application were only slightly different (9, p. 188). Echinacea was an important medicinal plant among the tribes of the Missouri River region, where its use for toothache was identical with that of the Comanche, but no mention is made of it as a cure for sore throat (7, p. 131).

Three plants were prescribed for the treatment of "sore eyes." The root of the Osage orange (*Maclura pomifera*) was boiled in water and the decoction used to bathe them; the stems of willow (*Salix sp.*) were burned and the eyes treated with the ashes; and the sap of the prickly poppy (*Argemone intermedia*) was administered to the eyes. It was said that in gathering this latter plant offerings in the form of beads or other objects were made to it.

A tea for "stomach trouble" was prepared from the roots of *Eriogonum longifolium*, and the leaves of mesquite (*Prosopis glandulosa*) were chewed, and the juice swallowed, to relieve acid stomach. A remedy for constipation was a drink made by boiling the stems of an unidentified plant (Comanche: *mawitsɔkᵛ*).

The bark of the prickly ash (*Zanthoxylum americanum*) was mixed with water and the decoction drunk as a cure for fever. Two other plants were also specified for the treatment of fever. The leaves of one of these (Comanche: *poiya*) were mixed with an herb (unknown

5: Carlson & Jones E, N-4, 5 (1933)1939
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824 to the informant) and boiled, the brew being used both externally
278 and internally. The stems of a sneezeweed (*Helenium autumnale*)
757 were soaked in water, and the body was bathed with this liquid. As a cure for colds the bark of the sumac (*Rhus trilobata*) was chewed and the juice swallowed.

A few miscellaneous remedies remain to be described.[4] The leaves of snakeweed (*Gutierrezia sarothrae*) were mixed with some other substance (unknown to the informant) as a remedy for whooping cough, and the roots of the nightshade (*Solanum sp.*) were boiled and the decoction prescribed as a general tonic, particularly in cases of tuberculosis. An infusion for reducing swellings was made from the red false mallow (*Malvastrum coccineum*) steeped in water. The tribes of the Missouri River region employed this plant in a similar manner (7, p. 103). Their practice was to chew the roots and apply
[752] them to inflamed sores and wounds as a cooling and healing salve. The mucilaginous properties of the plant probably account for its use in this way. The roots of the dotted button snakeroot (*Liatris punctata*) were chewed and the juice swallowed as a cure for swollen testes. The leaves of the pecan (*Carya illinoensis*) or of the walnut (*Juglans nigra*), ground and rubbed on the affected part, were thought efficacious for ringworm.

824 The Comanche used the branches of the Osage orange (*Maclura*
411 *pomifera*) in the manufacture of bows. This was the preferred wood
438 for the making of bows throughout most of the Plains region. Since the Osage orange occurs in only a limited area, from southern Missouri to northern Texas, its wood became a valuable trade article. There are accounts telling of the great demand for it among tribes as far north as the Arikara and the Blackfoot and as far west as the Pueblos. John D. Hunter, who spent many years as a captive among the Indians of the Arkansas and Missouri country, says of the Osage orange (11, p. 173):

[825 154] [4] Two nonvegetal Comanche medicines were also collected. Although these are not pertinent to a discussion of plant uses, they may be recorded briefly. One is the nest of some nondomestic bee (Comanche: *tipinatsu*), composed of a gummy substance which gives off a pungent odor when heated. The nest was placed on the fire; its fumes, inhaled by one who was unconscious, were said to revive the person quickly. The other medicine is a white chalky mineral, apparently fossil bones (Comanche: *ts.oβit'sitsuni*), which was obtained from deposits and used in treating sprains and fractures. The Comanche considered
[776] this mineral to be the bones of Piamupits, a supernatural being.

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115 year of school. This first phase consisted of lessons in identifying certain medicine
159 plants in the field and in the avenues of acquisition of medicines which were not
756 native to southern Oklahoma. Sanapia was also taught the rituals involved in the
[824] collection of certain plants and the various manners of rendering raw plant parts into
278 manipulatable medicine. Concomitantly, she was instructed in the skills of administering medicines.

The first phase initiated Sanapia's training period and continued throughout the next three years. Sanapia was next instructed in the diagnosing of all manner of human afflictions and their proper treatment. During this time she served as an aid to her mother and maternal uncle in their doctoring activities and thus was able to observe the actual treatment of patients as well as the required deportment of a doctor and his patient. However, knowledge of ethics and required role behavior of a doctor was not left to Sanapia's youthful observations alone. She remembers "long, long talks" when her mother and uncle would impress on her the proper behavior of a doctor.

115 These rules of conduct, in the way in which they deemphasize the signifi-
159 cance of the individual and emphasize the supernatural powers operating through
756 him, seem to have a distinctly Judao-Christian cast to them and appear to be some-
177 what counter to the more individual-oriented supernaturalistic notions recorded for the Comanches of an earlier time. Perhaps Sanapia, in her attempt to construct a unified religious structure from the three disparate supernaturalistic systems into which she was born, has slightly modified the tenor of the eagle doctor ethics and their premises, as taught by her mother and maternal uncle, to make them more compatible with other elements in her own personal syncretic supernaturalistic complex. It is highly doubtful that her mother, with her aversion to Christianity, would have so sensitively and systematically performed this feat.

Deportment of a Doctor

115 Most importantly, the doctor must lead a good and honorable life. The
159 Medicine demands this, and it would do harm to the individual possessing
756 it if he acted in a manner unbecoming a *puhakut*. Sanapia suggests that a *puhakut*
[761] and his Medicine are one. If a possessor of power, through his untoward behavior, brings disgrace on himself, he also brings disgrace on his Medicine, and as punishment his power could cause his death.

The doctor must also be always accessible. He cannot refuse anyone his services. Sanapia conceptualizes herself, in the role of eagle doctor, as the medium through which the Medicine operates. She "possesses" Medicine only in this sense, and, once she has committed herself to the life of a *puhakut*, it is no longer her decision as to who may or may not benefit from a supernatural power acting through her which can alleviate human suffering.

An eagle doctor must never extol his own abilities and should also dissuade others from doing so. Once again, Sanapia interprets this as a further means by which the doctor recognizes that it is not the doctor but the Medicine with which he has been gifted, which is responsible for the good works which are accomplished by him.

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3

Medicine Kit

Care of Medicines

SANAPIA KEEPS the various kinds of botanical and nonbotanical medicines which she utilizes in a leather "travel case." This case is kept on a shelf on the west wall of her bedroom. She will also only open her medicine kit on the west end of a room or tent. The medicines in the travel case are kept orderly and fully stocked at all times to facilitate speed in an emergency call on her services. Each medicine is wrapped in a piece of cloth. The cloth is black in almost every instance, though Sanapia states that this is only coincidence. In the inside lid of the case she keeps her Medicine feather—a tail feather of a golden eagle. 756 278

Sanapia is the only one allowed to touch this box or its contents, and she will not open it in the presence of small children or menstruating women. The medicine kit is potentially very dangerous if handled in an incorrect manner or by the wrong person. Sanapia recalls what happened to the niece of an eagle doctor who died several years ago. 756 278 783

> When S——— died, a niece got into her medicine bag. Now don't you know she sure shouldn't done that. But it got her . . . she got that twisted face and nobody fix her . . . couldn't do a thing for her. If she had sense, she would take that bag, don't open it mind you, and throw it in the creek. Then it couldn't hurt nobody.

Running water, because of its desacralizing effect, is Sanapia's only remedy by which the possible harm produced by an individual's inadvertent contamination by supernatural power or Medicine belonging to another can be undone. In a doctoring situation if it is absolutely necessary that another person touch some object connected with her medicine kit, this person must immediately be cedared, or "smoked," upon completion of the task; that is, the dried and rubbed leaves of the red cedar are sprinkled on live coals and the rising smoke is drawn over the contaminated person in a ritual cleansing act. After the cedar ritual

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someone must pour a ladle of water over each of his hands four times. The one who pours the water over the hands of the one contaminated and who aids in the cedaring may be any person present except, of course, a small child or a menstruating woman.

Sanapia forbids children near her medicines because she feels that such close proximity could make a child sick, cause him bad luck, or possibly kill him. She is not quite sure why the medicine could hurt a child, but she is sure about another aspect of the danger which her medicines present to children. Her special and unique power is ghost Medicine. She feels that ghosts therefore hate her and are constantly attempting to harm her and those close to her. This means that they are very likely near her most of the time, especially when she is working her Medicine against them or the results of their activity. Though they cannot harm her or adults who have courage to resist them, they can harm children, who are naturally weaker than adults in courage and Medicine.

With respect to her aversion to the presence of menstruating women while she is doctoring or when her medicines are open, she can offer no specific rationale except that these were the instructions she received from her mother. The only possible explanation which she felt she could offer is that loss of blood means weakness, and weakness makes an individual more susceptible to illness caused by supernatural or natural means.

Wallace and Hoebel (1952:158) write that among the Comanche all medicine had to be protected against contamination by grease as well as the presence of menstruating women. It is interesting that Sanapia is not concerned about the possible ill effects of grease near her medicines. In fact, when directly questioned about her reaction if her medicines actually came in contact with grease, she replied that she would simply wipe it off.

Nonbotanical Medicines

Approximately half of the contents of Sanapia's medicine kit is composed of medicines of a nonbotanical nature.

Crow Feathers

Four tail feathers from a crow are tied at their base to form a loose bundle and are hung near the door of a house as a protective amulet against ghosts. Sanapia states that the power in the crow feathers is intrinsic to the feathers and does not depend on her handling of them to give them this capacity. She always utilizes this amulet when she doctors because of her belief that ghosts are especially numerous when she begins to make Medicine against them. This amulet, therefore, aids her to dispel ghosts and acts to protect the house and its occupants from the evil designs of the angered ghosts.

Sanapia could offer no explanation as to why the ghost should fear these feathers. A Kiowa informant, who uses crow feathers in much the same manner as Sanapia, explained that ghosts sometimes appear at night as owls. The crow and the owl are natural enemies. By using crow feathers in this manner, one is en-

31: Jones E-5 (1967-1970) 1972 N06 Comanche N06
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The madstone, or medicine bone was used for wounds, infections, boils, and pains. It was a small piece of leg bone of the giant prehistoric mammoth believed by the Comanches to be the bones of *piamɜmpits*—the cannibal owl. Placed over the affected spot, it was supposed to draw out the poison. 756 755 237

Sanapia offers the following description of what *piamɜpits* was supposed to have looked like. 756 755 825

> It look like a man . . . big, old monster. They said it got a face like a man. It's got hair all over its body and it got big feet. It's tall, you know. They die of old age, I guess. They be way out there somewhere and just sit there and die. Just after awhile dirt just covering them up, and they go under ground like that. That's where they find this medicine up to today.

Sanapia grinds this medicine, which she calls "bone medicine," into a powder and mixes it with water to form a dilute medicinal solution. She sometimes simply wets the piece of bone and applies it to the afflicted area of the body. Bone medicine is used to strengthen bones and is especially effective in the treatment of sprains. Sanapia does not mention its use in the treatment of boils, wounds, or infections. 756 755 237 278

The Bible

Sanapia carries a Bible with her most of the time, and it is always present when she doctors. Before beginning treatment she holds the Bible in both hands before her and prays for power. 756 755 779

> I really read bible lots, and I go by the bible when I'm doctoring too. I always ask God to give power to my hands and mind. I pray hard to the Holy Ghost. I learned that bible while I was at Cache Creek school. My mother didn't go by the bible when she doctoring, but I do, because you got to ask God for help sometimes.

Medicine Feather

Sanapia's Medicine feather is the tail feather from a golden eagle. She employs it in every case she doctors, and of all the items which she carries when she doctors, this is the most revered. The feather is used to ceremonially "fan" her patient at various points during the course of treatment and as a general prop in her doctoring performances. It is always cedared before and after use. 756 755 237 825 778

"Fanning" is an act of blessing as well as a strictly curative act when performed by Sanapia. When it is being used as a tool in the doctoring procedure, she employs the feather to waft the smoke from certain smoldering medicines over her patient. At times though, during treatment and always immediately after treatment, Sanapia lightly taps the patient with her Medicine feather around the face and head, making four passes over the face and forehead and four passes over the back of the head. She then raps four times on each arm with a fanning motion. This is proceeded by four fanlike taps on the chest and back and four

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756 755 237 825 778 fanning passes over the front and back of the body from the waist down. Sanapia prays that her patient may live a long, healthy life as she fans him and that all evil will be blown away from the patient by the motion of the feather. She explains that she has the power of the eagle; and when she touches a person with her Medicine feather, it is as if the eagle were touching them, instilling in them some of its Medicine. Her feather carries with it the tabus associated with her other medicine articles. However, a specific emphasis was placed by her mother on the prohibition of taking the Medicine feather into a room or area in which there is a large group of people.

> That eagle got some kind of power that I use for Medicine. I got one eagle feather, and it is really powerful, that thing. And I believe it. I done many works with that feather. I believe it.

Indian Lard

756 757 "Indian lard" is the name Sanapia applies to tallow or rendered beef fat. She uses it as a general purpose salve, though she states that it is especially efficacious in the treatment of severe burns. Also, it is her only remedy for constipation. Two or three tablespoonsful of lukewarm liquified tallow are administered to a patient with constipation.

Mouth Wash

The majority of cases which Sanapia treats involve the sucking operation. When the sucking is completed, Sanapia requires something to kill the "poison" and the disagreeable taste which is left in her mouth. Her mother used kerosene; [278] however, Sanapia prefers a commercial brand of mouth wash and carries a small bottle of it in her medicine kit.

Red Paint

756 755 278 [386] The red paint used by Sanapia is obtained by grinding and powdering a dark red clay which she finds west of Geary, Oklahoma. The paint is reconstituted by mixing it with water or tallow.

The paint is ever present in all of her blessing ceremonies. She also uses this paint at the termination of her treatment of ghost sickness. On the last day of treatment, she paints the patient's face, lower arms, and lower legs. The patient is instructed to wear the paint for two days before washing it off.

756 755 278 782 823 Sanapia states that painting is a prayer to the earth. The red paint is obtained from the earth and is the color of the earth. When she applies it to her patient she is asking the earth to care for him.

> The earth . . . talk to it like a mother. They call it that. Say "Watch this man, or woman, or child. They walking on you, same color as you, they you child. You can see that. Watch out for them during the long time they got to be on you."

31: Jones E-5 (1967-1970) 1972 N06 Comanche N06
Oklahoma

Black Kerchief

Sanapia keeps most of her medicines wrapped in pieces of black material which are commercially sold as women's head scarfs. These large black squares of cloth are also used by some males as Western-style ties. When Sanapia is traveling without her medicine kit, though carrying her Medicine feather, she keeps it wrapped in a black kerchief.

The black kerchief, worn knotted at the throat, is a customary sign among the Comanches and neighboring tribes of a possessor of Medicine. Sanapia was instructed to always wear the black kerchief as a symbol of her powers. She does not wear this badge today for fear of ridicule. Sanapia does, however, keep a black kerchief tied to the headboard of her bed. She states that black is the color of luck and good fortune. She also adds that it indicates to ghosts that the wearer is not afraid of their powers.

The black kerchief, or piece of black cloth, can be used in doctoring to cover the patient's face when he is instructed to inhale medicine smoke. Sanapia sometimes uses the black kerchief in this manner during the doctoring of ghost sickness.

Sanapia collecting medicines, 1967.

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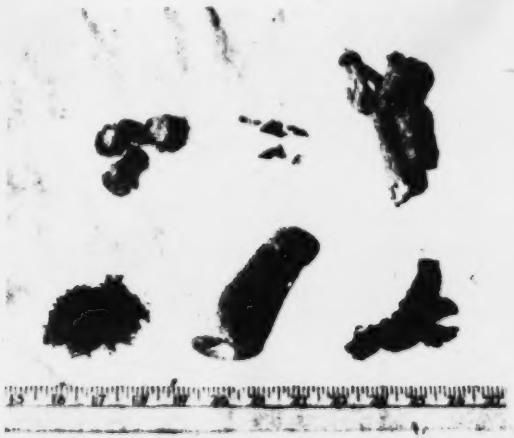
Botanical Medicines: Collection, Preparation, and Dosage

Sanapia collects her botanical medicines from their natural habitat in the late fall and early winter. She feels that by this late date the rattlesnakes, of which she has a morbid fear, will be less numerous. More importantly, she feels that plants are not completely matured until immediately before their death at the first frost of fall.

> I don't know how you could get any medicines in the spring. Just full grown is when they any good. That's when I get it. Rattlesnakes be gone too. In the fall they be already to get. Go get them when its cool, now its no good because it's summer. Too hot and too many snakes around. Plants aren't good now anyway for medicine.

The root is the most important source of medicine on any plant, according to Sanapia. She seldom utilizes other parts of a plant, but it is noteworthy that when she does, the part she uses is in almost every instance the top of the plant. Sanapia feels that the two most important sources of power for a medicine plant are the earth and the sun. She uses this rationale to explain her use of only the extreme top of plants, the part nearest the sun, and the extremity most surrounded by earth, the root. Peyote and cedar are notable exceptions to this scheme.



Bottom, left to right: medicine cedar, sucking horn, bakumak. *Top, left to right: peyote, glass slivers,* bekwinatsu.

31: Jones E-5 (1967-1970) 1972 N06 Comanche N06
Oklahoma

However, these plants are believed to possess a high degree of power by their nature and are therefore not so dependent on the earth and the sun for power.

In the fall when Sanapia judges that the sun is growing weaker and is less able to give power to the medicine plants, she begins her medicine plant collection. She feels she is then obtaining the medicines at their peak of maturity. In the case of my investigation of Sanapia, her collecting time fell in late October and early November. The later the summer and fall, the more efficacious the medicine plants will be since they have been exposed to the sun for an added amount of time.

For the most part the plants which Sanapia uses grow in sandy soil. She denies that medicine plants can be obtained from any other type of soil. *Basiwa:pi* is the word which Sanapia applies to this type of soil, and she translates the word as "sandy," "sandy ground;" or "best ground."

Sanapia follows a fairly rigid field preparation of the medicine plants she collects. As soon as possible after extracting them from the earth, they are taken to the nearest body of flowing water, where they are cut into manipulatable sizes and washed. Upon returning to her house, she once again washes the medicines and then stores them in the storm cellar, suspending some from lines which traverse the cellar and placing the remainder in jars. The immersion in flowing water applies to roots or plant parts other than leaves or flowering bodies;

Bottom: sweet sage. Left to right: mescal beans, chow feather amulet, charcoal from peyote drum, gray sage.

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Oklahoma

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824
[142]
291
302
516

Sanapia preparing medicine.

but since Sanapia almost exclusively uses only the root of the plant for medicine, this concern with flowing water seems ubiquitous on medicine-plant-collecting trips.

278
801
[171]

Her dosages of the various botanical medicines follow the mystical number four found in the southern Plains area. The medicinal decoctions and infusions which she prepares are always given in units of four—four cupsful, four spoonsful, and so forth. Her externally applied medicines, such as salves and liniments, are administered with four movements of the hand; and when dried cedar leaves are employed to produce medicine smoke, they are deposited on the live coals in the course of four consecutive abbreviated motions of the hand.

128

In the following discussions, a standardized introductory line will be used for each plant when possible. The Comanche term for the plant will be presented first, followed by Sanapia's translation of the Comanche term. The English translation of the Comanche term will be followed by the binomial classification of the plant, which in turn will be followed by the English common name.

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824
137

ekapokowa:pi

"red berry cedar" *Juniperus pinchotii* (red cedar; juniper)

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Sanapia refers to all other varieties of *Juniperus* as *taiβowa:pi*, or "white man cedar." She uses the dried and pulverized root to make a decoction which is internally administered to treat menstrual complaints. However, to Sanapia, the dried and rubbed leaves of the cedar are the most important parts of the plant. She sprinkles them on live coals, which are always formed from pecan twigs, to produce a thick aromatic smoke which is inhaled by patients suffering from ghost sickness, vertigo, or severe headache. The cedar smoke is also fanned over an individual by Sanapia in her blessing ceremony, a prominent aspect of all her doctoring activities. She uses the cedar medicine smoke in any instance when she is called upon to dispel the influences of the ghosts. When she is commissioned to ritually cleanse a house in which a death has recently occurred, she employs cedar smoke as a central core in this activity. When an individual is plagued by thoughts of a deceased relative, Sanapia prescribes a fumigation of the home with cedar smoke. She also strongly urges "cedaring" of the sleeping area before retiring at night.

> Only use that red berry kind . . . get it on those slick hills west of here. They say when you use that cedar and they smell it, it blows all that bad stuff and pain away from you with that smoke. It keeps you well, and you won't ever be scared or nothing. Lot of different ways it help you like that. It's green, and its living all the time. In winter, summer, anytime. I don't care when. It's got Medicine for that. That's why I use it.

natta"ksi

"sneezing medicine" *Helinium microcephalum* (sneezeweed)

This plant is collected in the early fall. The flowers are detached and allowed to dry. When dried, the flowers are crushed and inhaled through the nose to produce the desired violent sneezing.

Sneezing medicine is administered to patients suffering from heart "flutter," low blood pressure, and head and nasal congestion. In Sanapia's opinion, the sneezing stimulated by this medicine keeps the heart beating steadily and strongly, thus maintaining the proper blood pressure. Also, she has the notion that in old age the heart becomes loosened from the cavity in which it is supposed to be housed. The violent sneezing caused by this medicine is capable of shocking the heart back into its proper position.

For those suffering from sinus congestion or head colds, Sanapia makes a very effective "inhaler" out of a small bottle or can. The container is half filled with the sneezing medicine. The patient is directed to shake the container, remove the lid, and inhale the dust when he is suffering from head congestion. Sanapia got the idea for her inhaler from commercials for cold remedies which she has seen on television. Many of her ideas concerning the nature of head and chest congestion and especially colds stem from notions absorbed from viewing television commercials. She uses terms like "bronmicha" for "bronchial" and "simus" for "sinus." The bronmicha is everything in the chest cavity except the lungs and

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278 heart. Her idea of the location of the sinus cavities is essentially correct, though
824 she does not understand their function.
755
757
[177]

okɔpa

[137] "red bean" *Sophora secundiflora* (mescal bean)

Sanapia grinds the mescal bean to the consistency of granulated sugar and then boils this coarse powder, which she first wraps in a makeshift cloth bag. When the decoction has reached the desired brownish coloration, it is strained through another piece of cloth, and the liquid is used as eardrops in the doctoring
[84] of earaches and sores deep in the ear. Sanapia reports that her maternal uncle, a
[783] *puhakut*, would sew mescal beans into the cuffs of his trousers as protection against possible contamination from menstrual blood.

puitsasene

[137] "eye scraper" *Elymus sp.* (rye grass)

Sanapia uses a single looped blade of this grass as a filelike tool in the removing of "cataracts" (trichoma). She describes this treatment as follows:

> You take that and double it up and turn the eye lid over and scrape it just as easy as you can. Then you just scrape it and scrape it until it bleeds . . . that thing on there bleeds. Well, you just keep on scraping until it finally comes off. Its the eye lid that causes cataracts because those things rub on the eye and make them sores. You got to scrape the eye. Put sugar water on it after you scrap it. It makes it feel better. Put sugar on after that thing stops bleeding.

kunɔnatsu

[137] "fire medicine" *Zanthoxylum americanum* (prickly ash)

An infusion is made from the root of this plant and used for the treatment
[752] of fever. The powdered root is also used in the treatment of toothache and burns. For toothaches, the powder is wrapped in a piece of cloth and this tiny bundle of medicine is placed next to the afflicted tooth. The medicine promotes a numbing in the mouth. In the treatment of burns, the powder is sprinkled dry on the burn. The term "fire medicine" stems from the burning sensation which this medicine causes when it contacts an open wound.

*bakuma**

[137] "in the water" *Iris sp.* (iris)

This plant is an unidentified variety of *Iris* which is not native to Sanapia's home area of Comanche County, Oklahoma. Sanapia utilizes a decoction of the root in the treatment of colds, upset stomache, and sore throat.

*bakuma** is the only medicine plant whose locale of growth is to some extent controlled by Sanapia. Her mother transplanted a number of these plants

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to a spring near Sanapia's home, and Sanapia makes an effort in her collection of this plant to never totally deplete the planting made by her mother.

This *Iris* is very similar to a variety which is found in eastern Oklahoma, significantly in an area of high Creek Indian population density. The Comanches and the Creeks have had close ties since the late nineteenth century (Wallace and Hoebel 1952:304), and Sanapia remembers traveling with her mother to eastern Oklahoma to visit Creek acquaintances. It is possible that Sanapia's mother could have learned of the medicinal qualities of this plant from the Creeks and brought back a collection to her home in Comanche County. The peculiar characteristics of the variety of *Iris* which Sanapia uses as medicine could have resulted from natural modifications stimulated through time by this change in environment.

pɔbɔβi

"white sage" *Artemisia ludoviciana* (lobed cudweed; gray sage)

Sanapia employs the leaves of the gray sage in treatment of insect and spider bites. She chews the leaves and rubs the resulting moist pulp over the area of bites to relieve itching and swelling.

ɛsipɔbɔβi

"sweet smelling sage" *Poliomentha incana* (sweet sage)

This medicine plant comes from the area of the Mescalero Apache reservation in southeastern New Mexico. It is obtained for Sanapia by Fort Sill Apaches who have ties with the Mescalero.

In a doctoring situation when Sanapia must apply her mouth to the afflicted area of the patient's body in an attempt to suck the sickness from the patient, she chews a small piece of sweet sage and retains it in her mouth with the masticated medicine which is being specifically employed at the time. She states that the sweet sage acts to sweeten the usually bitter taste which results from this type of procedure. Sweet sage, in certain circumstances, is also added to *bekwinatsu* (to be discussed) to increase its potency. It is also added to various medicinal "teas" to make them more palatable to the patients.

During Comanche peyote meetings held on Sanapia's property, it was pointed out that the leafy cushion upon which the Chief Peyote rested was made of sweet sage. The sweet sage used in the peyote meeting is particularly valued by Sanapia as a medicine since it gains an added potency through its contact with the Chief Peyote.

bekwinatsu

"swelling medicine" *Matelea biflora* or *cynanchoides* (recumbent milkweed)

This is one of Sanapia's major medicines and one of the three plants which she attributes with some degree of intrinsic supernatural potential. The other two medicines so considered are peyote and cedar.

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278 824 755 757 A decoction of the thick white root is externally administered in the treatment of ghost sickness, bruises, bone breaks, and menstrual cramps. A paste made from the root is used to coat the finger during the treatment of "poking the throat." This procedure is usually initiated in the case of children with diphtheria or other conditions which are acting to close the throat passage. Sanapia applies the paste to her index finger and lightly probes the child's throat to the extent of her finger's reach. This same paste is used as a liniment in all cases of severe stomach pains. In addition, Sanapia spews from her mouth a very dilute decoction of this medicine on patients suffering from ghost sickness.

There is more ritual activity involved with the collection of *bekwinatsu* [782] than with any other plant medicine which Sanapia utilizes. Upon approaching the area in which the plant will be collected, Sanapia recites a short prayer.

> Well, I tell it that I'm coming to take it way with me. I say that I need you help peoples that got twisted face . . . what them ghosts do to peoples, you know. Then I tell it that I'm going to give it something in return. I supposed to put a piece of green goods over its branche before I dig it out. Sometimes I do and sometimes I don't. Sometimes I'm in a hurry so I don't do that, but that's what I'm supposed to do, that's what my uncle told me to do.

When she approaches the plant, she situates herself to the west of the plant and drapes a small strip of dark green cloth over the spindly branches. She then digs the plant from the ground, detaches the long root, and deposits the remainder of the plant over the hole from which it was extracted with the strip of green cloth attached to one of the branches.

tanawiha

[137] yellow flowers"; "makes knife sticky" *Guitierrezia dracunculoides* (broomweed)

Sanapia uses this plant medicine for the treatment of exzema and rashes when prepared as she describes:

> Get the tops . . . the flowers . . . and boil them into a jelly. Now, when anybody got excema, you just wrap it on . . . put it on a rag and wrap it on there. Use the tops . . . just tops. Boil them good and when they cool down, they get just like jelly. That jelly is what you use for medicine.

kusiwɔna

"it's gray" [No specimen]

This is one of Sanapia's major medicines. It is used as an addition to many medicinal preparations to increase their potency. An infusion made from the root is also used as a sedative in the absence of peyote or concomitantly with peyote. It is specifically used, however, in the treatment of "fits" (epilepsy?) and as the main medicine employed in the treatment of witch victims.

When used to treat fits, the splintered root is boiled to a tea, and the

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patient is liberally dosed with this decoction until the symptoms subside. According to Sanapia, this root is unusually hard and therefore difficult to prepare for use as a medicine. However, she considers its extreme hardness as a positive quality since she associates hardness with compactness; therefore, she feels there is more medicine to a piece of *kusiwɔna* than there would be to practically any other medicine of equal size.

In the treatment of victims of witchcraft, a decoction of this root is utilized in several different ways. It can be made into a thick paste which is applied to an area of minute incisions which are made by Sanapia with slivers of glass before she begins to suck from the victim the magically toxic feather which has been introduced into the victim's body by the witch. The decoction can also be drunk by the patient, or it can be spewed on him by Sanapia in the course of treatment.

do:ltsa

[No translation] [No specimen]

Sanapia obtains this medicine from Shoshone friends who live on the Fort Washakie reservation in central Wyoming. She utilizes the thick root of this plant, without modification, as a medicine to induce appetite and stimulate weight gain. A decoction made from this root is also used in the treatment of tuberculosis.

From Sanapia's description of *do:ltsa* and its properties, it could be suggested that this plant is *Perideridia gairdneri*, a wild caraway, called *yap* by the Comanches (Kearney 1951:615). Since Sanapia first acquired this medicine from an Arapaho uncle, who in turn suggested to her certain Shoshone as further sources for it, the name which she uses may well be Arapaho, Shoshone, or Sanapia's Comanche-ized corruption of an Arapaho or Shoshone word which is applied to this plant.

bɔ:tasas

"looks like feathers" [No specimen]

This medicine, like sweet sage, is obtained for Sanapia by Fort Sill Apaches from the Mescalero country. The fruiting body is made into an infusion which is internally administered in the treatment of tuberculosis, various stomach complaints, and postnatal hemorrhaging. A thick paste is prepared from these fruiting bodies and applied as a liniment to the chest and throat of those suffering from pneumonia. No specimen would be obtained. However, from Sanapia's description, *Agoseris* might be suggested as a highly probably genus affiliation.

oinatsu

"vomit medicine" [No specimen]

Sanapia reports but one use for this medicine plant. A decoction of the root is taken internally by patients afflicted with asthma or chest congestion. The described results are quite spectacular.

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278 824 755 757 You just give them a cup full of this, and another cup, and another, and another . . . they just be filled up with that medicine. Sit around for ten or fifteen minutes and that medicine just goes in their stomach and stirs up all that fluid, whatever it is. When you got asthma, you got all those bronmicha [sic] tubes filled with slobber. That medicine takes it out. It comes out by itself, you don't have to vomit or nothing . . . through the mouth . . . comes right out. Some of it comes through the nose too. It runs out fast and they get well. You don't have to treat them another day longer.

itse

[No translation] [No specimen]

This medicine comes from the Mescalero Apache region and is obtained from the same sources which supply Sanapia with *batasas* and *esipobobi*. Dr. Harry W. Basehart of the University of New Mexico, who has done field research among the Mescalero, states the word *itse* is very similar to a Mescalero word which means "mystical influence." Mrs. Julia A. Jordon made a similar suggestion based [177] on her experience with the Kiowa-Apache of Oklahoma. There is a strong possibility, then, that this word has been borrowed from Apache into Comanche.

[752] [825] The part of the plant which is utilized as medicine seems to be from Sanapia's description, a fruiting body. The plant is chiefly used as a remedy for the bites of rattlesnakes and as a rattlesnake repellent. Sanapia describes how she uses it as a snake repellent for her son:

> When he goes to the field, like now, I have it boiled and I just rub it on his leg like that and then a cloth and pour it on and tie it around his boots . . . pour it all on there. Now if there's a rattlesnake running right there, he right up on him, but he won't jump him. He smells that and he just lay low. It'll kill that snake right now. I don't know how it does it. That medicine is really strong. A rattlesnake ain't going to smell it. They going to die if they smell it.

Sanapia recalls that she saw old people among the Comanche carry it in small cloth sacks tied to their belts or around their ankles in order to repel snakes. [752] In the case of snake bite, the *itse* is chewed to a pulpy consistency and spread over the fang punctures, or it is retained in the mouth of the one who attempts to suck the poison from the wound. It is also used in this manner for the bites of poisonous spiders and scorpions.

In addition, Sanapia boils it into a thick broth for patients suffering from pneumonia. She notes that one of *itse*'s interesting characteristics is that it causes excessive salivation, and she therefore employs it when she must induce salivation in a patient.

osidobeda

[137] "peyote" *Lophophora williamsii* (peyote)

Peyote is Sanapia's most utilized general medicine, and in her opinion its curative properties can aid in healing any type of human physical affliction. She grinds and pounds the dried buttons to a powder which is then boiled or

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steeped to produce a decoction or infusion of the desired consistency and coloration, or she employs the powdered peyote buttons alone. She also makes a medicinal relish from the green peyote buttons. In many cases the peyote is left unaltered and used in its dried or green state. 278 824 755 757

As mentioned, Sanapia can involve peyote in the treatment of any type of illness. Peyote is used mainly by Sanapia as a painkiller and sedative. It can be prepared in numerous ways. To quiet pain, Sanapia gives the patient four peyote buttons to eat, in most cases by chewing them first. For colds, pneumonia, and internal disorders, a decoction or infusion of peyote, commonly called "peyote tea," is administered.

When treating ghost sickness, Sanapia manipulates peyote in several ways. The patient is given four buttons to act as a sedative. During treatment Sanapia puts some dilute peyote tea in her mouth, releases a portion of it into her hands, and applies this to the affected portions of the patient's face. While retaining some of the solution in her mouth, she applies her mouth to the patient's face. She may also spew this thin decoction over the patient if she believes this type of procedure would be efficacious.

She applies thin, latitudinal, coinlike slices of the peyote button in the treatment of arthritis, severe headaches, heart pains, and in any relatively localized area of pain. Of course, a liquid preparation of peyote can also be administered in these conditions. The exact manner of administration and preparation of all medicines is determined by Sanapia through experience and inspiration.

Sanapia carries several peyote buttons with her at all times. She considers this her minimal doctoring kit. Peyote is extremely important to Sanapia as a medicine. However, she feels that her powers make her superior to the peyote. She states that peyote is the most powerful of all plant medicines. It is also one of the few medicines which Sanapia talks to and the only one which she threatens.

tɔpinatɨ

"rock medicine" 278 824

This medicine is not a botanical item. I include it under the section on botanical medicines for several reasons. Sanapia feels that rock medicine is totally composed of plant parts. Also, at times she speaks of it "growing on rocks." 237 755 757

Tɔpinatɨ is the word which Sanapia applies to the gummy, amber-colored matrix produced by a variety of mason bee as the basic material for its egg depositories. This solitary bee affixes these irregularly shaped cases, which are usually between ½ and 1 inch in diameter and approximately one-fourth of an inch thick, to rocks and then proceeds to camouflage the case by inserting local grains of sand and pieces of gravel into the sticky matrix of the case. It is from the resulting rocklike appearance that the medicine gains its Comanche name. Sanapia describes its composition:

> Some little bitty bugs get gum from the cedars on them slick hills. Then they take bites from the yellow flowers on them broomweeds, and some sage

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278 824 too. Put it in their bodies and mix it up so they can stick it on these rocks like you can see. That's why this medicine works best with cedar.

237 755 757 Rock medicine is only used in conjunction with cedar: Both are deposited on live coals to produce medicine smoke. The *təpinatsu* sputters when placed on the coals and produces a thick white smoke which is not unlike cedar smoke in [754] odor, though more pungent. This medicine's major use is in the treatment of ghost sickness and the results of witchcraft.

Sanapia picks the tiny pebbles and grains of sand from the *təpinatsu* and forms the then-translucent amber-colored gum into a ball about an inch in diameter. She rolls the ball between her palms and the heat and friction polish it to a glassy brown-gold color. It is in this form that it is utilized as medicine.

There is a medicine similar in kind to *təpinatsu* which Sanapia reports is found in the vicinity of Wichita Falls, Texas. The Comanche word for it, according to Sanapia, means "rats make it." It is described as being of the same composition as *təpinatsu*; however, instead of being produced by "little bugs," it is believed to be produced by pack rats. The gummy substance is melted in hot water, and persons suffering from paralysis, other than the kind caused by ghosts, are bathed in this concoction. This medicine, unmelted, is also applied directly to the area of paralysis. Sanapia remembers that her mother used this medicine; however, it was not transferred to Sanapia when she became a doctor.

278 824 755 757 [844] [303] Another medicine plant of which Sanapia has knowledge, but which was not transmitted by her mother to her, is one which, when mixed *bekwinatsu*, was administered as a sedative to women in protracted labor. The seeds of this plant were utilized as medicine when boiled into a medicinal decoction. Sanapia also states that the seeds of this plant augment the attractive aroma of Indian perfume (*Monarda fistulosa*) when the two are mixed and moistened.

I can just sit here and look at them bald prairies and see four kinds of medicines growing. I bet you can't even see them? Not many . . . even of my people, up to today, can even see them growing early in the spring. I can because I've learned that way. There's lots of plants that can get you well, but they ain't many people who even know that anymore.

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various power sources for the task at hand. She deposits some cedar on the coals and smokes her Medicine feather by lightly waving it through the rising smoke four times. She then lays her feather on the fragment of Mexican sarape, which also underlies the medicines she will use, and holds her hands in the medicine smoke. With a washing motion, she draws the smoke over her face, arms, chest, and legs. After she "cleanses" herself with the smoke, she takes her feather and ceremonially fans her patient. 775 755 756

She then takes her Bible between her palms and, extending her arms before her, she prays to "God and Jesus and especially the Holy Ghost" to assist her in healing her patient. If she is inspired to do so, she will sometimes open her Bible at random and read from it in an attempt to receive a sign from "God, Jesus, or the Holy Ghost" concerning the direction she should take in her doctoring, or the possible outcome of her treatment. 775 755 756 779 782

Next, Sanapia picks up her Chief Peyote, and holding it in her right hand, she speaks to it. As mentioned in the chapter on medicines, Sanapia will usually threaten the peyote rather than beseech it or pray to it when she uses it in dotcoring. As she talks to it, she will transfer it from hand to hand in order to draw the power it possesses into her hands. 775 755 756 278

After Sanapia has made her opening prayers, she is in a very agitated emotional condition. This is mentioned both by Sanapia and by some of her expatients. She considers the chills, shaking, and trembling that she experiences as signs that her power has entered her, and she will not begin to doctor until she reaches this state. 775 755 756 152

> And when I pray like that . . . well, that power just come over me, comes down and gives me that chills and I start shaking all at once and pretty soon it goes away and then I start. Sometimes I can't hardly touch them, the way my hand be shaking. It makes me feel like that power wants to make me get them well right now.

When she has regained control of her hands after the siege of trembling, Sanapia begins the treatment proper. She takes a segment of the white root of *bekwinatsu* and masticates it to a moist pulp. She then spews it over the patient's face, head, and arms if they have been affected by the ghost contagion. She also takes this moist pulp, and, after rolling it between her palms, she rubs it over the areas of the patient's body which exhibit symptoms of ghost sickness. After so doing, she deposits this premasticated root in the patient's mouth and instructs him to to swallow it. 775 755 756

Sanapia then chews another piece of *bekwinatsu* together with a few leaves of sweet sage to sweeten her mouth and, retaining this concoction in her mouth, applies her mouth to the contorted areas of the patient's face to suck out the sickness. Although she has the option of utilizing her sucking horn in other cases, she is obliged to use her mouth in the doctoring of ghost sickness.

Her mouth and hands are the areas of her body which are believed to be especially charged with power. This is the rationale for the spewing of medicines on a patient, the administering of medicines which have been premasticated by

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third treatment at sunset on the first day. Sanapia will usually organize a specialized peyote meeting at this juncture. She carefully selects those to be invited, choosing only three or four individuals who she believes are especially good people and who have prayed with her in the past in similar situations. The local peyote leader is always included in this group since Sanapia concedes that it is his right to lead the meeting, though it is understood that it will be led for her purposes.

This meeting is held indoors. The fire is laid on a piece of sheet metal supported on several bricks. Most of the standard elements of a Comanche peyote meeting are present in this meeting—water drum, gourd rattles, sage wand, cedar staff, Chief Peyote, feather fans, eagle feathers, and Bull Durham tobacco and corn shucks for ceremonial smoking. The tepee is obviously lacking, as is the crescent-shaped earthen altar, the leader's whistle, the water ceremonies, and the ceremonial breakfast.

The meeting proceeds in the usual manner. Sanapia doctors throughout the meeting at those times when she feels particularly inspired to do so. When she desires to doctor, the leader signals those present to cease the singing and passing of the drum and accompanying paraphernalia. Sanapia then waits for the fire to die down to coals before she begins to doctor. She bases her treatment during the meeting on the basic pattern which she followed in the first two treatments earlier that day. However, at this time she adds the use of peyote to her doctoring.

After the smoking of her Medicine feather and herself, the fanning and smoking of her patient and all those present, and the applying of *bekwinatsu* she gives the patient four peyote buttons which she first has masticated. After the patient has taken the required first four buttons, he is doctored with a decoction of peyote. This "tea" is drunk by the patient, and it is applied externally by Sanapia as well as being spewed over the patient's face, head, and hands.

At sunrise when the meeting ends and the peyote drum is disassembled, Sanapia sometimes requests the moist drumhead from the leader and utilizes it in doctoring her patient. She presses the wet hide over the top of the patient's head and forms the hide to the contours of the patient's face while she prays that the patient's face will be cured when she takes the hide off. There is the notion that the pliable qualities of the wet hide will be transferred to the patient's face, and as Sanapia forms the hide, so might she reform the patient's contorted countenance.

She takes some of the sweet sage used to support the Chief Peyote used during the meeting, and after chewing it and rolling it between her hands, she rubs it over the afflicted areas of the patient's body. Sanapia takes a mouthful of water from the peyote drum and blows it over her patient. Some of the charcoal from the drum is used by Sanapia to draw a series of concentric circles on the contorted area of the patient's face. This magical act is supposed to constrict the "foamy stuff" which is causing the contortions of the face by first drawing it within the outer circle, then within the next smaller circle, and so on until the sickness is so localized that it will be a simple task for Sanapia to suck it out.

The seven stone "bosses" which are employed to attach the drum head to the kettle drum body are also utilized by Sanapia as medicine. Sanapia takes